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The Making and Re-making of Dolpo Identity: A Case Study of Do-Tarap

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The Making and Re-making of Dolpo Identity
A Case Study of Do-Tarap

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Identity Politics

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Table of Content

Acknowledgement -----	4
Methodology-----	5
Abstract-----	6
Introduction -----	7
Political Identity	
● What and How Domestic and International Forces Impact Dolpo-----	9
• <i>Nepal's Nation Building Plans in Dolpo</i> -----	10
• <i>Abolishment of Transhumance by the State</i> -----	12
• <i>Knowing the Self from the Other</i> -----	12
• <i>Switch of Resource Manage Right from the Local Community to the Government</i> -----	13
● <i>Actions Taken to Reach and Engage with the Government</i> -----	13
• <i>More Accessible Education In and Outside of Dolpo</i> -----	14
• <i>Education and the Changes</i> -----	14
• <i>Striving from Do-Tarap and Kathmandu</i> -----	15
● <i>Bumpy Road to the Government: Difficulties of Reaching the State</i> -----	15
• <i>Persistent Ignorance From the Government</i> -----	15
• <i>The Struggle of the Road</i> -----	16
• <i>The Dilemma: What Can I do if I stay?</i> -----	17
Economic iIdentity	
● The Middlemen of the Great Himalaya Trade -----	18
• <i>Tibet Says No to Middlemen and Their Adaptations</i> -----	18
• <i>Mobility as Identity</i> -----	19
● Yarsta Gunbu: Money or Stability? -----	20
• <i>The New and Trendy Do-Tarap</i> -----	21
• <i>Social and Economic Instability</i> -----	21
• <i>Always Not Enough: The Transition From Community to Individuality</i> -----	22
● My Resource: Understanding Insider and Outsider in the Resource Management-----	23
• <i>If You Take Our Winter Firewood, Where Is the Money: bad policy, mismanagement and undesirable implementation</i> -----	23
• <i>The Outsider and Insider: management of Yarsta Gunbu resource</i> -----	24

Social and Cultural Identity

- *Communal Work and Common Identity*-----26
- *Where is My Goat?* -----27
- *Culture Preservation*-----28

The Dangers and Difficulties Faced In Advocating For Dolpo

- *The Loss of What Culture: Romanticization of Dolpo*-----28
- *The Gap and The Elite*-----30
- *The Over politicization of Dolpo Identit*-----31

Recommendations On What Should Dolpo-pa Do And Why Should State Care

- *Rally Between the Himalayan Mountains and Terai Plains*-----32
- *Why Should the State Care?* -----33

Conclusion-----34

Bibliography-----36

Suggestions for future study-----37

Appendices A: List of interview-----38

Appendices B: Glossaries-----39

Picture of author doing fieldwork-----39

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Methodology:

The Making and Remaking of Dolpo Identity: a case study of Do-Tarap is accomplished on a basis of a substantial amount of interviews conducted both in Do-Tarap and Kathmandu. In order to include as many perspectives as possible, the scope of people being interviewed is extensive. Interviewees' ages range from sixteen to eighty-four and occupations from normal villagers, Yarsta Gunbu businessmen to activists of Dolpo-related movements and the Under Secretary of the ministers from the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. During the stay in Do-Tarap, the author of this Independent Study Projects also tended to talk with people that have unique living experiences such as those who experienced of Khampa guerrillas' settlement in Do-Tarap and the Maoist insurgent in Dunai to better understand their ideas on outside village affairs. Realizing the lack of women's voice in the research when half way through the time in Dolpo, the author actively reached to women by visiting the women in the households and greenhouses when they were waving wools or making chubbas. In order to balance the portion of interviews from each age group, interviews are labeled into several categories and the number of interviewees from each group is similar. Due to the fact that many young people are going to schools in Kathmandu, the author spent around a week living with the students in the same hostel, and conducting interviews after they are back from school. Having heard so many complaints from the villagers regarding to local resource management and the road constructions from Dunai to Do-Tarap, the author visited many government offices and interviewed officials from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and the REDD Implementation Center, a department of the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation.

Most interviews were carried out in interviewees' kitchen/living rooms, with cups of delicious Tibetan tea and pieces of Chinese crackers. Sometimes, it also took place in greenhouses where people usually stay during the day. Most of the interviews conducted in Do-Tarap were translated by academic collaborator while all interviews were done directly by author in Kathmandu.

Aside from interviews, information about Dolpo's history and cultures are extracted from academic books such as *High Frontiers* by Kenneth Bauer and "*The Abduction of the Divine Bride - Territory and Identity among the Bonpo Community in Phoksumdo, Dolpo,*" by Marietta Kind. Other supporting theories such as romonaticization of Tibet and the idea of Zomia are also retrieved from books and newspapers.

Social media such as Facebook functions as a platform for the author to understand Dolpo-pas' opinions without directing engaging with them. And it has been providing really insightful and interesting perspectives about the Dolpo identity. The well-known movie, *Himalayan*, also helps depicting how Dolpo is perceived by non-Dolpo-pas in the early twentieth century.

Abstract

The unbelievably harsh environment in Dolpo forces people to be self-sufficient based on agriculture and husbandry, two sectors that complement each other very well. The condition also requires plentiful communal works for survival. Dolpo's geographical isolation on the one hand, limits Dolpo-pas from encountering others, and on the other hand, prevents the presence of the central government. Before the 1960's, Dolpo still remained as a politically autonomous region under the Kingdom of Nepal. However, based on interviews conducted with both local villagers and outsiders such as governmental officials and Nepalese, the paper argues that, starting from the 1960's, Dolpo-pas began to realize the importance for them to reach the government, not only for the political rights they are granted by the constitutions, but also for the increasing need of support from the government.

This transformation, of people from avoiding interactions with the government to taking initiative reaching and actively engaging with government, is made possible by Nepal's state building project, education development, economic prosperity and the shift of international politics. During the past fifty years, Dolpo-pas' political, economical, social and cultural identities are in constant changes of the making and remaking process, by both international and domestic forces. Although approaching the state is accompanied with many difficulties such as the ongoing ignorance from the government and social and economic instability, with negotiating, resisting and readaptating the changes, Dolpo-pas are thriving in the Nepali society. That being said, there are still potential problem that might generated from Dolpo-pas' advocations for the local communities, so maybe alternatives are needed to improve the situations.

Introduction:



Rising slowly from the other side of the mountain, the sun lightens part of the Tarap valley with soft beams of light and leaving half of the valley in shadow. Wandering along the dirt road on a chilly morning, one can see the smoke from breakfast fires curling up lazily toward the morning sky. Footsteps on the road create a cloud of dust which is illuminated in the glow of the sunrise. Yaks grunt as the sun climbs up the mountains, transforming the sky from pearl blue into a rich dark blue, which compliment the brown treeless mountains around. Frozen streams and snowfall start to melt, creating a soft soundtrack of trickling water to accompany people working in the yards. This typical morning in Do-Tarap village might to some extent represents the simplicity of life and beauty of nature in Dolpo, a region situated in the remote Dolpa District in western Nepal.

According to *“The Bon Landscape of Dolpo: Pilgrimage, Monasteries, Biographies and the Emergence of Bon.”* written by Marietta Kind, in the past, Dolpo was a place where people seek refuge and escape from the state control. Dolpo, Ladakh, Lo, Serib and other areas of modern India and Nepal are described as having been part of Zhangzhung, an early kingdom or a loose confederation that expanded from western Tibet to all directions. Zhuangzhung’s territory varied over centuries, mainly due to the rise of the Tibetan Empire in the eighth century. According to the historical manuscripts found in Dunhuang Caves, it was Songtsen Gampo who annexed Zhuangzhung Kingdom. However, the Bon sources ascribe the conquest to Trisong Detsen. (Kind, 2002) After the annexation, for more than two

hundred years' rule between King Songtsen Gampo and King Langdarm, many people fled and migrated south and east to remote areas such as Dolpo. These population movements toward Dolpo and the Kali Gandaki may have been fueled by individuals who sought refuge from the feudal debts being distracted by the kingdoms of western Tibet, so from the central government. "While the Buddhists gained influence and grew very successful during Trisong Deste's ruling period, the Bon doctrine was suppressed and its followers were persecuted, and either banned from Tibet or forced to convert to Buddhism. Apart from a few hermits the people of Zhangzhung, especially the Bonpo, fled and re-established their tradition in more eastern areas, one of these being Dolpo." (Kind, 2002; 46) "After the decline of Buddhism during the rule of king Langdarma and the following disintegration of the Tibetan Empire subsequent to his assassination, prominent Bon scholars were invited by the rulers of Purang and Lo to reinforce Bon religion in the tenth century. And the revival of Bon forced many Nyingma-pa fled to less-centralized area such as Dolpo." (Kind 2002; 49) These accounts of the history of Dolpo explain why there are mainly Bonpos and Nyingma-Pas in Dolpo, and if true, illustrate that Dolpo as a place where people settle to flee from religious persecution and control from the central government.

Despite whether Dolpo-pas ancestors initially came here on purpose to avoid the central authority and religious persecutions, Dolpo-pas before the 1960's actually had been enjoying the limited presence of the state. Even though Dolpo, as tributary regions of Lo Kingdom, was swallowed indirectly by the Kingdom of Nepal in 1789, between 1789 and mid-twentieth century, Dolpo was a region where the writ of government barely ran at all and politically autonomous internally, if only by dint of their isolation. (Bauer, 2004; 63) The region and its people benefitted from very limited political interference from the state, acting more like an independent political entity which had predominant power to self-govern on the basis of fulfilling the duty of taxation to the Lo King or the state.

Although Dolpo remained peripheral to the Nepali state up to the 1950's, dramatic transformations that were observed both domestically and internationally in the second half of the twentieth century brought great changes to Dolpo, which eventually impacted and transformed Dolpo-pas' identities in relation to politics, economies and society. Starting in the 1960's, the Nepali state tried more actively to fully incorporate Dolpo into its system, politically, economically and socially. The state also intended to create and strengthen the so-called Nepali national identities by means such as education and policy design. On the international level, life in Dolpo is also affected by decisions made by the Chinese government regarding to its Tibetan areas bordered Dolpo. Despite the fact that Dolpo-pa's ancestors might settled here to avoid interactions with state and most of them till 1950's have enjoyed the "independence," Dolpo-pas in the twenty-first century are actively taking initiatives to reach and engage with the Nepali state as they, especially those well educated ones, came to realize that it is not desiring to be forgotten anymore – the support from the state is crucial for their developments and as citizens of the country, they have the right to demand such support. These changes are in part due to many reasons such as the development of technologies, transportation and communication, more accessible education and outreach efforts made by the government. Dolpo-pas also become more active in Yarsta

Gunbu business and culture preservation. Consequently, their identities in relation to politics, economic and societies have transformed drastically over the past few decades: increasing association of their life with the Nepali state and government; new understanding of resource management under the State and with outsiders; the change of middlemen role between Tibet and the lower villages and so on.

This observation of Dolpo-pas, residents of Zomia area, taking initiatives to reach the government is in contrary to James Scott's argument that that "the continuity of the ethnic cultures living there provides a counter-narrative to the traditional story about modernity: namely, that once people are exposed to the conveniences of modern technology and the modern state, they will assimilate. Rather, the tribes in Zomia are conscious refugees from modernity itself, choosing to live in more primitive, locally based economies." (Scott 2009) Just as Arun Agrawal said, "Lives may be stories of acceptance, accommodation, and compromise, but they are as much stories of renegotiation, resistance, and adaptation." "Dolpo's history over the past fifty years demonstrates that, amid geopolitical transformations, local border communities are not simply passive beneficiaries or victims of world statecraft. Rather, population alike dolpo's are active agents in these social, political, and economic processes of change, even on a global scale". (Bauer 2004; 188) This paper is a case study of Do-Tarap, a village in Dolpo. It aims to illustrate how Tarap-pas are actively reacting to all changes and how their identities are changing for the past fifty years in relation to political, economical and social transformations happened in Do-Tarap. It also compasses the difficulties Tarap-pas face either to reach the government or dealing with outsiders, and the potential dangerous direction the advocating movement is going towards to. At last, it tries to explain why it's important for the government and state to respond to all these changes in Dolpo in relation to the current situation in Nepal.

Political Identity

During the second half of the twentieth century, social transformations and political changes are taking place around the world. In Nepal, these political, social and economic forces on both national and international level are remaking Dolpo-pas' understanding of what is government and what does it mean to have a government, which stimulates the transition of the Dolpo community from escaping the state to engaging with it. Many approaches are utilized by villagers to reach and interact with the government. However, due to the political structural of the society which inherently expels representatives from Dolpo, the poor road connections between Do-Tarap and the headquarter, and the lack of sufficient job opportunities in villages, Dolpo-pas are having a hard time reaching and working with the government to improve the current situation of being neglected.

What and How Domestic and International Forces Impact Dolpo

Before the 1960's, Dolpo-pas had rarely any knowledge about the Nepali state and governments for two reasons. First of all, the state mainly controlled the north border regions external affairs, leaving the right of self-governance to the villagers before the 1960's, frontier regions like Dolpo maintained close cultural and economic ties with Lhasa and other

ethnically Tibetan border communities. (Bauer P65) In addition, within the frontier regions, Dolpo fell fiscally and administratively under the control of Tibtu, Jumla and Lo Kingdom throughout time, so its external relations with the state were mediated through the Thakali and agents of Lo, border people who enjoyed privileges granted by the government. It seems Dolpo was still immersing in its own world prior to the 1960's. However, most Dolpo-pas now have much deeper understanding of what is government and what should the government do for them. The sheer transition from being away from central government for centuries to understanding, accepting and even actively reaching to the government is made possible by both external and internal forces: the external forces are the nation state building project initiated in Dolpo by the government and stop of transhumance between China and Nepal by the Border Protocol developed by two governments in 1963; and the internal forces are Dolpo-pas' realization of Dolpo being ignored by the government for a long time, the increasing amount of affairs that need the intervention from the government, and Dolpo-pas' better understanding of the obligations the state has and the essential rights they have because of more education and interactions they with the outside world.

- *Nepal's Nation Building Plans in Dolpo*

Actually, Nepal started state building early in the nineteenth century. Muluki Ain, a national caste system and set of codes that was established in 1854, is designed in 1854 to legitimate Nepal's political identity, unify internal administration and establish a cohesive legal system to replace existing regional ones. (Bauer 2004, 71) However, the more extensive and efficient nation building process didn't start until the late 1950's. India won independence in 1947 and Mao Zedong announced the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, which later on partially contributed to the close of the border to pastoralists in northern Nepal. These changes on international level leave Nepal into a landlocked situation, trying to rethink its position as a nation state and thus to strengthen the national identity among its diverse populations. Additionally, the Tibetan Uprising occurred in Lhasa in 1959 convinced King Mahendra that Nepal lacked sufficient political sophistication to remain a unified country. (Bauer 2004, 101)

Nepal's nation building has reached the goal of presenting and implanting the fact into Dolpo-pas' minds that Dolpo is part of Nepal. Many changes were brought to Do-Tarap by the government, in order to guarantee the transition from local political autonomy to a centralized state. In the early phase of the process, government sent teams to northern border regions to survey the borders, and later it signed the border agreement with China because border is the marker of sovereignty, thus claiming territory is part of nation-state building. With the introduction of Panchayat system in 1962, which aims to standardize and bureaucratize of administration in rural area, Dolpo's traditional system of governance was reconstituted within the Nepali state's administration. (Bauer P102) Similarly, beginning in 1996, the traditional land tenure regimes of Dolpo have also been subordinated within the Nepal state. Tsewang Lhundup still remembered in 1996, surveyors from the government came to Dokyu and measured their land. After that, each household was given a piece of paper to show which land belongs to it. The privatization and systemization of land is crucial

in the sense that government tax the land based on the documents. Prior to 1996 all taxation rights were in the hands of the Lo Kingdom. “Taxes were quite heavy and people avoided cultivating the fields when they thought they wouldn’t have enough to pay. This was really bad because the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. If you don’t have money to pay, that means giving the sheep and goats or other material goods for the Lo king, or through religious services. Now there is a land title and the taxes are lower.” (#7 Tsewang Lhundup /Pema Lhazam) Although Lhundup and Lhazam preferred the current government, the cute eighty-four-year old women, in her red chubba, thought differently. While spinning the yak wool, she said, “The Lo Kingdom taxed fields and male animals. When the representatives came to Tarap, we had to not only take care of the people, but also the animals they took with them. Later, when the Nepal government replaced Lo, we still need to feed the officials from Dunai. However, I like the Lo Kingdom better because the government is really harsh and strict about the taxation. With Lo, the price is negotiable.” (#16 Tsewang Tsering) Later in the 1980’s and 1990’s, the nation building speeded up with creation the VDCs, Shey Phoksumdo National Park and the establishment of Dunai as the headquarter.

Dolpo is historically divided into four valleys in the fourteenth century when it was under control of Lo Kingdom: Tsharka, Tarap, Panzang, and Nangkhong. (Bauer 2004) However, in 1975, the government introduced a new system called Village Development Committees (VDC) in those valleys. And those four valleys are remapped into 6 VDCs: Do-Tarap(Dho), Saldang, Tinkyu(Tinje), Bicher(Bhijer), Tsharka(Chharka) and Barbung(Mukot). After the creation of VDC, the next important step is to build the national identity by issuing citizenship cards. According to Karma Wangyal Gurung, “Since the generation of my grandparents, we started to have Nepali citizenship which tells us we are Nepalese and we have all the rights. However, the registration of citizenship is a bit problematic. “About 25 years ago, the Nepalese government came to Tarap and issued citizen cards. We don’t have caste system in our culture, so the officials just put whatever they want after our names. It’s really funny that my father is Gurung while his brother is Lama.” (# 4 Nima Dargeyl)



(Marietta Kind, 2002)

- *Abolishment of Transhumance by the State Nepal's Nation Building Plans in Dolpo*

Agro-pastoralists living in extreme environments like Dolpo's are severely impacted by the closing of Tibet border. Not only because their livelihoods are dependent on taking the animals to Tibet for winter pastures, but also because the salt-grain trade that had been practiced for centuries will be cut off. Consequently, many communities on both sides of the border entered more fully into relationships of dependence with the numerically and politically prevalent population, which in the Dolpo case are the lower villages. This process of peripheral population engaging with nations state is an intense intersection of history. (Bauer 2004, 132) As group of people from Dolpo, villagers couldn't do much about the desperate situation aside from requiring the Nepali government to negotiate with the Chinese one. Citing the severe hardship its northern communities had incurred, the Nepalese government repeatedly requested the Chinese to open the Tibetan border to transhumance, which they finally agreed in 1984, but only allowed Nepalese from four districts. (Bauer 2004, 136)

- *Knowing the Self from the Other*

Aside from the external forces that are altering Dolpo, internal factors can't not be overlooked in the process of manufacturing the Dolpo identity. The interactions with others help Dolpa-pas realize that they are overlooked both in the history and in the current situation. Thakali people had special privileges of controlling the Himalayan trade passes; Sherpa prospered from the trekking industries around Mt. Everest and the Lo Kingdom enjoyed the

opportunity to be the middlemen to collect tax. All these groups share a similar culture with Dolpo-pas, but the Dolpo-pas have none of these special permission. Not only comparing with people from Nepal, they also compare their lives with those of Tibetans' on the other side. Pasang Lama is a businessman who deals with Khampas in China. He complained about not having enough support from the Nepali government because "...they can pursue whatever they want and when they do business, they have more support from the Chinese government. Khampas can take loans from the bank at a really low interest. In the TAR regions bordering Dolpo, nomads also get special rights and better facilities from the government. We saw it when we went to the annual market. Sadly, there is no support from our government. I think we should also have similar attention from the Nepali government." Comparing themselves with other privileged groups in Nepal and border communities assures Dolpa-pas that they have been ignored by the government for long, thus demanding more help from the government.

- *Switch of Resource Manage Right from the Local Community to the Government*

Local resources used to be managed directly by villagers with the help from the local committee. The location being geographically isolated also restricted the influx of outsiders, thus limiting the use of local resource by others. However, incidents such mapping part of Do-Tarap into the Shey Phoksumdo National Park's buffer zone, more confrontations between Tarap-pas with outsiders during the Yarsta Gunbu picking season and other higher than village level clashes regarding resource management, require more presence from the government because these things are beyond the scope of the local committee's ability. Most inter-valley conflicts are settled through the local committees and headmen. However, the dispute of rangeland between Panzang Valley and Tarap Valley in 1991 was eventually solved by the government intervention, (Bauer 2004, P131) so does the clash happened last year in Do-Tarap due to Yarsta Gunbu. As one villager put, "Yartsu is the root of some problems. But these problems also brought the attention from the government, which resulted in more presence of government." (#4 Nima Dargeyl)

- *More Accessible Education In and Outside of Dolpo*

The fact that education becoming more available for children in Dolpo definitely contributes to their increasing consciousness of having governments and better understanding of its obligations. Crystal Mountain School (CMS) was founded by Action Dolpo in Do-Tarap in 1994. It is the first school in Dolpo, and over the course of its operation, more people are educated by CMS, therefore becoming more aware of the essential rights they have as Nepalese and demanding those from the government. The first and second round of graduated students from grade ten, in a total of eleven, went back to the Do-Tarap in 2007 and found out so many problems. (#1 Pasang Darbo) Accordingly, in the past eight years, the educated have been incredibly active in advocating for Dolpo-pas. Every time when there is a public meeting deciding something, the villagers, especially the aged, will hand over the decision-making right to the educated, as a way of saying we follow you. "People used to be ignorant of many things. They don't know what rights they have, what should be done to

improve the lives here. As one of the very few first educated people, I have the responsibility of leading villagers.” (# 4 Nima Dargeyl)

Actions Taken to Reach and Engage with the Government

Education is a crucial part of the component in the effort Dolpo-pas have made to reach to and engage with the government. The more education they have, the better equipped they are to deal with the governments. Aside from acquiring knowledge, they also take actual actions by going down to Dunai and negotiate with governmental officials. Some efforts are also made in Kathmandu, where Dolpo-pas have easier access to the central government. These attempts are essential and incredibly useful either for preparing people with things they should know about government or actually solving problems.

• *Education and the Changes*

One of the most important abilities in reaching and engaging with the government is the acquisition of fluent Nepali. Unlike in New York where Chinese immigrants can take the citizenship test and driver's license test in Chinese, everything related to government in Nepal is carried out in Nepali. In order to equip students with proper Nepali language and understandings of the society, CMS, instead of enrolling students into Tibetan Governmental Schools, started to send them to Nepali schools five years ago. In a talk with Gyalbo Bhote, the administrative person at CMS, he expressed that “the main focus of CMS now is the Nepali language, preparing students for their future in blending into the society and dealing with bureaucrats.” The decision of switching from Tibetan Governmental Schools to Nepali schools didn't evolve only from the idea of improving the Nepali language, but also from the fact that as culturally Tibetan people, Dolpo-pas found it strange to participate politically events related to the Free Tibet Movement organized by Tibetan Governmental School. Nima Dargeyl went to Tibetan Governmental School with the support from CMS, and he recalled the time when he was forced to join the peaceful marching in Boudha. “At that day, we all went to Boudha to protest and to sing songs. I don't know what we are protesting about. Because we're not Tibetans, and don't care about it.” (# 4 Nima Dargeyl) The rules designed by Tibetan Governmental Schools also prompt the shifting of schools.

How do students and parents think about the change and the reason behind it? Mingmar Tsering's daughter is in Kathmandu now. When talking about how being culturally and linguistically different from majority Nepalese makes it harder to find a job or enjoy other opportunities, he thought “if government doesn't change the policies, going to Nepali schools won't make a difference.” (#13 Mingmar Tsering) However, the students have different opinions. Tashi Lhamo and Tsering Youdon Lama are 10th grade students. One night after finishing Thukpa, we sat on the ground in the hostel and talked about what do they think about the change. Tsering thinks it's good to learn Tibetan but Nepali and English are more important, because English is the universal language and Nepali makes communication easier, so clash happened last year in Do-Tarap will less likely to repeat. Tashi, while agreeing that English is important, thinks it's better to learn Nepali because “it's the prerequisite for daily lives and dealing with government officials.” Living in Kathmandu where Nepali is used

everywhere is making a difference on what students think about the language: students who have come down to Kathmandu experienced the difficulty of not having enough Nepali, thus thinking Nepali is more important, while students who stay in Do-Tarap will think Nepali isn't that significant. Namgyal dharbo just passed the seventh grade exam, and will come to Kathmandu next year for further studies. He is excited and a bit nervous for Nepali school, but Namgyal actually prefers Tibetan school because he wants to learn Tibetan, his mother tongue. It will be interesting to see whether he still thinks so when he comes to Kathmandu and use Nepali all the time.

- *Striving from Do-Tarap and Kathmandu*

Aside from using education to prepare people for reaching the government, the educated ones also help local villagers by going down to Dunai and talk with the government officials regarding to problems villagers have with the government. Other educated people stay in Kathmandu because it is much easier to go to the government and rally with other organizations such as indigenous people group, to advocate for Dolpo. Tashi Tewa came to Kathmandu with his father in 1985. He thinks that easier access to the government makes it more possible and efficient to form a top-down strategy from the national level. "It's really hard to accomplish any projects in the villages because it takes lots of time to negotiate with government, which is a few days walk away. Also explaining the project and persuading each villager to accept the project is time-consuming. So the best approach is to design something from the national level and apply it to the local one." (#22 Tashi Tewa)

Bumpy Road to the Government: Difficulties of Reaching the State

Ironically, although Dolpo-pas' awareness of governance is growing and they are putting a substantial amount of effort into engaging with the government, there seems to be little response from the government side. Along the bumpy road of empowering and advocating for Dolpo-pas, there are still many obstacles and hardship ahead. Among the difficulties ahead are mainly government's ignoring of Dolpo, poor, if not no, road construction between Dunai and Do-Tarap, and the lack of job opportunities to keep the educated ones staying. The government should take most of the responsibility, if not all, for upsetting Dolpo-pas, and the Dolpo-pas at the same time, need to reflect on what needs to be improved from their own side.

- *Persistent Ignorance From the Government*

Why the Nepali state, which focused on national identity and state building in Dolpo from the 1960's, still overlooks, even ignores people's increasing contact with the government? A few explanations were given by villagers from Dolpo, mainly Do-Tarap. It's fascinating to hear that connections were drawn not only to the structures of political system in Nepal, but also to the implications brought by foreign media coverage and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).

Can you imagine that Dolpo, a region that forms most part of the Dolpa District has not

even a single representative on both the district and national level? While some people blamed it to having small populations in the elections and the caste system (#22 Tashi Tewa), others ascribe it to Dolpo-pas' lacking awareness and interest in participating politics, and insufficient Nepali education of many people. (#15 Gyalbo Bhote) Admittedly, it's both the problem of the government not paying attention to balance the representatives and of villagers disliking politics and government. In addition to that "politics is expensive, and hard to get into if no one from Dolpo has ever done so," said by Karma Wangyal Gurung.

Nepal has been increasingly depending on foreign interventions such as foreign aid and foreign investments. Its nation building projects and marginal population are also closely participated by foreign organizations. Action Dolpo is a French NGO that concentrates on the development of Do-Tarap. Over the past twenty years, it has been focusing on bringing education and health services to villagers in Do-Tarap, and has made great contributions to the village compared to those made by the government. The present of Action Dolpo, despite the benefits it brings, sometimes makes it more difficult for villagers to engage with the government. The government officials in Dunai don't like Action Dolpo, because they feel threatened as being less important and powerful for Dolpo-pas. On a sunny afternoon, sitting in a bright greenhouse, drinking Pucha and eating freshly roasted barley, Tashi Gyurmey said "when we go down to Dunai asking help from the governments, the officials tell us to contact Action Dolpo. 'You've got Action Dolpo. We can't help you.'" (#6 Tashi Gyurmey) Ridiculously, projects started by Action Dolpo are indeed also supported by the Nepali Government. So, aren't they supposed to react to villagers request? One interesting perspective given by Tashi Tewa demonstrate Nepal as an independent modern nation state, its domestic policies are influenced by foreign coverage. "If there are more foreign coverage on Dolpo, the government will pay more attention to us as a way to get foreign help." (#22 Tashi Tewa)

- *The Struggle of the Road*

If you'd ask the author about the most difficult part of this trip, the answer is no doubt the trekking from Dunai to Do-Tarap. Climbing up from altitude near 2000 meters all the way up to 4000 meters is not easy on well-paved concrete roads, not to mention cliff side roads of unstable sand and stones. The three and half day trek from Dunai to Do-Tarap is unbelievably dangerous, filling with stories of many animals and villagers falling and losing their lives. This road condition creates extreme physical barriers for both villagers and government to meet and engage with each other. It also prevents the presence of many governmental service workers who want to help Dolpo. Tashi Gyurmey, when being asked "if there is one thing the government could accomplish for Do-Tarap, what do you want it to be?" He replied, "education is of course important, but temporarily, the road construction from Do-Tarap to Dunai is the most wanted, so Tarap-pas can reach the government more easily. Also it really helps villagers bring goods from the lower villages to Dolpo."

In order to know why the road has never been a concern of any project from the government, an interview was conducted with Tilak Paudel, current Under Secretary of the

minister from Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. Tilak Paudel used to be the chairman of Dolpa District Development Committee, and he actually started the six-year project of building road from Juphar, the only airport connecting Dolpa with the outside, to Dunai. In order to explain why there was no initiative taken to build the road from Dunai to Do-Tarap, he first talked about the situation in Dolpa. “ A long time ago the government decided to connect the headquarters of Dolpa and Jumla, the only two out of seventy-five districts that haven't been connected by national highways. And many years later, the same objective is still on government's agenda. Because the terrain is so rough to build roads on, and the lack of equipment, skilled labors and engineers also impeded the plan. If the headquarters are not connected, how can we transport the necessities such as road construction materials and equipment to Dunai and to build roads? (#24 Tilak Paudel)

• *The Dilemma: What Can I do if I stay?*

Because CMS started to provide classes only in 1994, people who were born before 1980's are basically uneducated thus are not knowledgeable about the government. They are the vulnerable people who need help when dealing with the government. Although many children are receiving education now and there are many students who have successfully completed studies in Kathmandu, only a few of the educated stay Do-Tarap and help villagers. Thus, the ability of the village as whole to reach the government is very low.

According to Nima Dargeyl, a teacher who graduated from and works for CMS, many parents send their kids to Kathmandu or India for better education when they are around 8, so they have little attachment to Do-Tarap's culture and people, and are more used to the city life. Consequently, very few of them come back to serve their community. However, he also argued that the fact they don't come back is partially due to the lack of job opportunities in Do-Tarap. The only work one can find in Do-Tarap is working for schools and clinics. Therefore, people who have received good education and came back become jobless. Then what's the point of coming back? “There should be more job market in tourism sector, green house, engineer, construction, tailor, carpeting and so on. We need to create a good environment for people who want to serve the community.” (#4 Nima Dargeyl)

Two Tarap students who studies in Kathmandu now prove Nima's words. “I want to be a doctor in the future and go back to Do-Tarap to help villagers. However, I'm not sure whether there will be enough facilities for me to work there,” said by Tsering Youdon Lama, a 16 year-old high school student. Her concern is further testified by Wangmo Darbo, a nursed served in Dolpo for three years. She was trained professionally as a nurse, but she couldn't get the government job because she wanted to work in Do-Tarap. “I am overqualified for the government job in Do-Tarap. They think I should work in Kathmandu for big hospitals in order to fully realize the skills I obtained.” (#20 Wangmo Darbo) Not only is Wangmo caught in the dilemma, many other genuine Tarap-pas who want to contribute to the community also find it hard. Government, instead of opposing the idea of highly educated people going back to their villages, should design more beneficial policies to encourage similar intentions, because itself also benefits from the developments of villages without actually putting much effort.

Nepal's nation building, the increasing understanding of the government, the changes on geopolitics and foreign intervention all have greatly impacted Dolpo-pas' perceptions of the Nepali state. Deeper comprehensions of their fundamental rights and responsibilities of the state urge them to engage with government more actively. The approaches they utilize, though effective, fails to get more attentions and help from the government, leaving Dolpo being still ignored. It's obvious that the existing difficulties such as lacking road construction and insufficient job opportunities for the educated are also contributing to hardship of reach the government. The changes in the political identities of how they understand the government and advocate for themselves is really fascinating. That being said, Dolpo-pas' identities are also impacted by economic activities such as the shifting from barter economy to cash economy, the prosperous of Yarst Gunbu business and new understandings of local resource management.

Economic Identity

Dolpo-pa's economic identities is linked closely with the political decisions made by the Chinese government and the market economy of China. The closure of the border region in Tibet impacted Dolpo-pa's traditional way of making a living and encouraged them to interact more Nepalese from the middle hills. The sheer increasing need of Yarsta Gunbu by the Chinese market also in a way determined the social and economic dynamics of Dolpo society. The change of agro-pastoral lifestyle and focus on Yarsta Gunbu are internally related to local resource management. These changes are both positive and negative, bringing Dolpo-pas new ways of understanding the world and themselves.

The Middlemen of the Great Himalaya Trade

Starting from the 1960's, Dolpo-pas have been experiencing the shift from being middlemen of Tibetan salt between Tibet and middle hills to middlemen transporting Chinese products from Tibet to Nepal. During this transformation, Dolpo-pas started to depend more on the middle hill people since their mobility to the Tibetan side is restricted. However, due to the development of infrastructure such as airport and road, Dolpo-pa's mobility is also expanded. Mobility is essential to the identity constructions of Dolpo-pa as it provides chances for them to see the world and interact with others, which will ultimately help forming and changing their Dolpo identity.

• *Tibet Says No to Middlemen and Their Adaptations*

International politics, while seems to be very broad and only has impacts on national levels, can actually endanger many people's lives in some ways. On January 20, 1963, the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Nepal signed a "Boundary Protocol." Although still allowing barter trade within an area of thirty kilometers from the border, the protocol prohibits Dolpo-pa from migrating and using the winter pastureland on the TAR side. It articulates, "...both governments should abolish the existing practice of trans-frontier pasturing by border inhabitants of both countries. Each party shall see to it that no new cases of trans-frontier pasturing shall be allowed for its border inhabitants, nor shall the

trans-frontier pasturing which has been given up be resume in the territory of the other party.” (Bauer 2004, 82) The agreement, though seems fair as pastoralists from both side are not allowed to graze other’s pastures, is actually more detrimental to border communities in Nepal as Nepal relinquished claim to hundreds of square kilometers of grazing that pastoralists in their Himalaya relied upon. The transnational agreement, developed solely by two groups of politicians, fail to represent the interest of the majority, Dolpo, for example. The northern border regions of Nepal were the first affected negatively by such external forces and the last helped by the central government. (Bauer 2004, 112) Consequently, Dolpo-pa and their livelihoods are in extremely frustrating situations.

Before the closure of the borders in 1963, Dolpo-pas are middlemen of the Trans-Himalaya trade between Tibet and Nepal’s middle hills. They mostly take locally made clothes, wool and some modern commodities they get from Kathmandu with their yaks to Tibet and in exchange for Tibetan salt and animals such as goats and sheep. After returning from Tibet, they continue descending to the lower villages, exchanging grains with Tibetan salt and animals Nepalese needed for Dasain Festival. The salt-grain trade pattern had been practiced for centuries. However, with the borders closed in the 1960’s and the Nepali state starting to subsidize Iodized salt and grains later, Tibetan salt is no longer needed by most of the lower villagers. Except the shift in the trade pattern, the severer change brought by the protocol is the loss of the pasturelands for goats, sheep and yaks, which Dolpo-pas heavily depend upon for the herd’s dairy products, wool, and the ability to transport goods. The enclosed of Tibet’s winter range fundamentally undermined the stability and productivity of Dolpo’s pastoral economy. (Bauer 2004, 113)

Regardless of the negative impacts the closed border brings, active adaptation, resistance and renegotiations could be seen in the community. Closing of the border increases the incentives to exchange goods with the middle hills, exposing the culturally Tibetan people more to the Nepali speaking community, thus exchanging not only grains, but also culture and identities. To adapt the brand new circumstance, Dolpo-pas started to commute more frequently to lower villagers, establishing firmer connections with their netsangs, business partners and fictive kin. As for the trade, cash economy gradually replaced barter economy, and now they are middlemen of the Chinese products between Tibet and the lower villagers, as Bauer mentioned “Indian salt with mass produced Chinese products have shifted both the tenor and trade in north Nepal.” Mingmar Tsering has been going to the annual border market for more than 20 years, sometimes even twice a year. He recalled, “17 years ago, the border was much more flexible. In the past, we took the salt from Tibet to the lower villagers, but now it’s different: we take modern commodities such as watches and radios from Tibet and sell them to the lower villagers. The modern stuff that used to come from Kathmandu is now replaced by those from china.” (#13 Mingmar Tsering)

- *Mobility as Identity*

“As a pastoral strategy, mobility is also a form of social organization and identity.” (Bauer 2004, 46) The changes in the directions Dolpo-pas migrate and travel to create whole new identities for themselves. Although the mobility of Dolpo’s pastoralists is contracted due

to the close of the border and limitation of pastoralists' use of national rangeland by the Community Forest Act, the establishment of Jufal airport, which connects Dolpa with Kathmandu and other big cities, and the road constructions inside Dolpo expanded Dolpo-pas mobility as they are now travelling to many places for pilgrimages, visiting family members and other activities. For Dolpo-pas, mobility is both an economic strategy and a marker of identity. Mobility cannot be explained solely as economic strategy: it also affords people numerous opportunities to create fresh understandings of who they are and how they can engage with the world. (Bauer 2004, 201) Mingmar Tsering always says he's Nepalese when he's in Tibet, "Because Tibetans in China call us foreigners, I'm Nepalese, not Dolpo-pa." This new understanding of himself is originated from the interactions with Chinese, which is permitted by mobility. Mingmar's adventure to Tibet makes him encountered with his identity as Nepalese, explaining the way mobility helps identities development.

The adaptation of the middlemen role from Tibetan salt to Chinese products, and from Tibetan border areas to Nepal's middle hills shows the resilience of Dolpo-pa responding to political and social transformations. The mobility Dolpo-pa enjoyed is continuously making and remaking their understandings of things, so does the Yarsta Gunbu business.

Yarsta Gunbu: Money or Stability?

Part of the Dolpo-pas' mobility is facilitated by the income generated by the Yarsta Gunbu business. Yarsta Gunbu is a fungus that is parasitic to a caterpillar. It has been used as Tibetan medicine for hundreds of years. However, it didn't reach the popularity until the late twentieth century or the early twenty-first century. Yarsta Gunbu business began in Dolpo around 2005, and it gradually becomes the major, if not the only, source of income for most of the households in Do-Tarap. Usually, a piece of Yarsta Gunbu is at least around 500 Nepali rupees, and the price can be as high as 1200 Nepali rupees when the business is good. On average, during the Yarsta Gunbu picking season, one individual can collect near 200 pieces, which in total would be at least one thousand US dollars. If a household has as many as four people to collect Yarsta Gunbu, it can gather about four thousand dollars, an incredibly large amount of cash for Dolpo-pas considering they used to depend on agro-pastoral economy and barter trade.

The Yarsta Gunbu business transforms the local economy from exchange that's based on personal self-made products to public resource like Yartsa Gunbu, and from the barter economy to cash economy. Money generated from the business is spent primarily on living commodities such as food and clothes. When there is extra money after purchasing all the necessities, people also invest in rebuilding houses, buying motorcycles or travelling to places like Kathmandu for pilgrimage, thus expanding their mobility. Since the past decade, Dolpo-pas have been continuously experiencing dramatic changes brought by the Yarsta Gunbu business, both positive and negative. These changes include the increasing living standards, more interactions with the outside world, and social changes such as more thieves and robbers and a raising sense of competition between households. It's also noticeable that the fact of Yarsta Gunbu being national, public resource helps Tarap-pas develop a better understanding of resource management in the national context. All the political, social and

economical changes brought by Yarsta Gunbu are in a way remaking Dolpo-pas' understanding of the world, the state, the village and more importantly, of themselves.

- *The New and Trendy Do-Tarap*

Pasang Darbo is the manager of the Snow Leopard Hostel, a student residence supported by Action Dolpo for Do-Tarap students in Kathmandu. When he went back with the author to Do-Tarap after 4 years staying in Kathmandu, the major thing, if not the only, he kept talking about was how many new buildings were built in Do-Tarap. "This one is new. That one is new. The one over there is also new. Wow! There are so many new buildings." Although the burden of transportation still falls on horses' back, the emergence of Chinese brand motorcycles is not new to villagers of Do-Tarap. The first motorcycle was taken to Do-Tarap 7 years ago. It costs around two thousand dollars for the motorcycle plus 1000 Nepali rupees for one liter of petrol – a lot of money for Tarap-pas. However, it doesn't seem worthy because one can only ride it in Do-Tarap valley and carry small load of things. Then why would some people invest so much money on this seemingly useless thing? "Young people buy it maybe because it's fancy, and they want to follow the trend." (#4 Nima Dargeyl) On a sunny afternoon after cups of milk tea and a few Chinese crackers, it's time to wander around searching some young people to talk with. Pemba Gurung and Tsering Wangyel, twenty and twenty-two years old boys, testified Nima's point. "Motorcycle is cool and trendy compared to horses. Boys need it to impress girls." This idea of following the trend is definitely new resulted from more people traveling to places and witnessing the "trends". Similar to owning horses, having motorcycles is also an indication of wealth in Do-Tarap. As mentioned earlier, the fortunes Yarsta Gunbu generated which permitted a greater mobility for Dolpo-pa also alter people's perception of the world and themselves.

- *Social and Economic Instability*

Obviously there are many positive changes happening in Do-Tarap. However, based on the interviews conducted during author's stay in the village, many people are complaining about the negative aspects linked with Yarsta Gunbu: people's lives are becoming less stable, both socially as village security is facing problems with the increasing number of crimes, and economically as raising dependent on Yarsta Gunbu.

The total population of Do-Tarap is small enough for individuals to know each other. Centuries-old traditions of communal works and helping each other create a harmonious society where crimes seldom happen. Although the financial situation varies from household to household, it's not very different before the economic boom of Yarsta Gunbu. However, with the gold rush of the Yarsta Gunbu, more than ten thousand people are visiting Do-Tarap each year and some of the villagers become a lot richer than others. The changing social and economic dynamics in the village breed some undesirable activities. Yarsta Gunbu brings social instability to the village. Nowadays, there are more thieves and robbers. Ganga Karki, an English teacher at CMS, said what she loved about Do-Tarap was the simplicity and honest people had here, but the culture was changing as more people travelled and settled here for Yarsta Gunbu. "There was no fear before, now there is a little fear." (#3 Ganga Karki)

The clash happened responding to Yarsta Gunbu taxation in 2014 between local villagers and governmental officials, which left many injuries and two deaths, is also demonstrating that Do-Tarap is becoming more socially unstable due to the Yarsta Gunbu business. However, not only that, villagers' financial situations are also becoming unsteady due to pre-spending their "income" by taking loans from the lower villagers and the increasing semi-dependence, if not full, upon Yarsta Gunbu.

Since around 2005 when Dolpo-pas started doing Yarsta Gunbu business, the market has been booming with the price keeps going up insanely. Villagers thought this was a steady way of earning money, thus started pre-using the money they would "earned" before actually earning it. They mostly take loans at a high interest from rich businessman or lower villagers. Nevertheless, the market is unpredictable and always impacted by the policies designed by the Chinese government since most of the Yarsta Gunbu will be sold to China. This year, the Yarsta Gunbu business was not good. The price was low, so many villagers suffered from debts. This bad business this year encourages people to reflect on the decisions they made in the past, thus modifying their views on the Yarsta Gunbu business.

Pasang Lama is one of the businessmen who collects Yarsta Gunbu from villagers and sells them to Khampas in the TAR. During the first three years, business was quite good, and he made some profit. But this past summer, the price is very low, and he almost lost everything." Luckily, he hadn't given up his old way of living in order to decrease the risk because "you can't guarantee the business will be good in the future." (#12 Pasang Lama) "This year would be terrible if I gave all up and focused only on Yarsta Gunbu." (#12 Pasang Lama)

Although this year is miserable for most of Dolpo-pas, some people such as Lhakpa Dhondup thought it was a good year in a way that it gave people a lesson of not depending so much on Yarsta Gunbu. "The price crisis this year makes people realize that they can't rely solely on Yarsta Gunbu because it's unpredictable." (#19 Lhakpa Dhondup) Mingmar Tsering, sitting by the warm fire in the new concrete made house, told a sad story of how this year, he experienced three days work ended up collecting only one Yarsta Gunbu. This experience made him realize that if there was no Yarsta Gunbu, Tarap-pas had to depend more on the lower villagers. In a nutshell, the dependence of Yarsta Gunbu on the one hand generates economic instability for Tapra-pas, and on the other hand helps create less dependence on the lower villagers.

• *Always Not Enough: The Transition From Community to Individuality*

Yarsta Gunbu, in addition to stimulating the social and economic instabilities in Do-Tarap, has to some extent, altered the sense of belonging to the community to the household and individuality because some people are becoming profit-oriented. Although Tarap-pas still follow the traditional way of cultivation and husbandry, now they are working faster and harder. Why would people work harder after earning lots of money from Yarsta Gunbu? Dawa Dolma thought because Yarsta Gunbu brought cash, which offered people new houses, clothes and modern facilities. "It seems there is a greater desire for the cash, thus people work harder." (#18 Dawa Dolma) Unsurprisingly, the greater desires for more

products promote subconscious competitions between each household. Before Yarsta Gunbu, life was normal and the work is the same from year to year. People help each other for the sake of helping each other because they didn't know what were the ways to make money. But now, due to the confidence and competition Yarsta Gunbu invented, it's likely that people will start grouping with friends and relatives, and "competing" with each group. (#19 Lhakpa Dhondup)

The economic boom of Yarsta Gunbu business brings plentiful social and economic changes into Do-Tarap. These changes facilitate the remaking process of Tarap-pas' identities as they are now materialistically more engaged with the outside world, with the influx of Chinese products and by following the trends from places like Kathmandu, relating themselves more with households as opposed to community in the Yarsta Gunbu competition, and understanding their decisions in the future business. Noticeably, the Yarsta Gunbu business also provides villagers the opportunity to learn more about resource management in both national and regional levels and to question the idea of insider and outsider in resource usage, thus knowing more about their positions within the Nepali state.

My Resource: Understanding Insider and Outsider in the Resource Management

Before the Nepali state started nation building in Dolpo by introducing new systems of organizing public affairs and resources, even shortly after the introduction, Dolpo still remained pretty much self-governed in many ways. For example, when talking about the rangeland management, Bauer wrote, "the ownership of land goes to the government, the de facto usufructuary authority lies in the hands of Dolpo-pas." (Bauer 2004, 131) However, with the closing of borders which exacerbated the urgent need of pasturelands from pastoralists, and the new phenomenon of Yarsta Gunbu, the government speeded its involvement into resource management in Dolpo. The recognitions of local resource being nationalized, which means the compliance of the rules designed by the government, and the need for villagers to pay tax for each Yarsta Gunbu they collected are new. Tarap-pas, people who used to depend heavily, if not fully, on the environment they inhabitant in and who nowadays rely heavily, if not fully, on Yarsta Gunbu business, have been suffering from the changes on resource management. The two reoccurring discourses mentioned by people from Do-Tarap are related to revenues generated from the Shy Phoksundo National Park and the juxtaposition of insider and outsider.

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- *If You Take Our Winter Firewood, Where Is the Money: bad policy, mismanagement and undesirable implementation*
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Shy Phoksundo National Park was established in 1984 with its buffer zone declared fourteen years later, which includes a tiny uninhabited region of western Do-Tarap. Nepal's National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, amended in 1993, states "those living in buffer zones became eligible to receive up to half the income earned in any national park, reserve, or conservation area for community development activities." This act recognizes Tarap-pas' right to receive revenues from the Shy Phoksundo National Park. However, not even one rupee was delivered by the Nepali government during nearly four decades of its

establishment. It is undeniable that the protection of the endangered species, flora, fauna animal and culture inside and around the park is important, and some local people are benefitting from the incentives. Nevertheless, the livelihoods of people living in the buffer zones are equally, if not more, important. This is especially true in the case of Do-Tarap, a village located on over 4000 meters with extremely harsh environments. Tarap-pas' lives are relying primarily on the local resources and intertwined with the fate of the surrounding areas. Consequently, although the buffer zone allows villagers to use local resources outside of the national parks as usual, the restriction on utilizing the resources from the national parks prevents people like Tarap-pas from having sufficient firewood and pastureland for herding animals. The mismanagement of the parks resources by non-locals - who have little knowledge of local ecologic system - also makes the environment less ideal in the future. Under this circumstance, what the government fails to consider is how much of Tarap-pas' livelihoods are counting on the place they settled in, and the requirement for local resources is primarily driven by needs.

Aside from the limited right to use the resource, the more frustrating thing is that the give-up of the precious resources did not get Tarap-pas anything beneficiary in return. The Shey Phoksundo National Park took the resources from the local community without fulfilling the duty of delivering the park revenues. Thus, villagers started to question where are the revenues. According to the officer from the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, which includes the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, 30% to 50% of the national park revenue should be allocated to the Buffer Zone Management Committee, formed by representatives from national parks, local villages, and government officials, for the development of schools, clinics and so on. "Villagers complain that they don't get the revenues from the national park because there is little revenues generated from the park. Shey Phoksundo National Park is geographically remote, physically hard to get to and not as well known and developed as Chitwan National Park or Sagarmatha National Park. So very few people visit Shey Phoksundo each year. Accordingly, revenues generated from the national park are limited. Also, there are many villages in the buffer zone, so it makes sense that each VDC will get only small part of the revenues." (#23 Hari Prasad Pandey)

Tarap-pas gradually understand the government is not only for the benefits of the local community: when there is confrontation between national interest and local interests, the national ones go first. The local resource being managed by governmental officials and prevented from villagers by the national law makes Tarap-pas vulnerable and unimportant on the national stage.

• *The Outsider and Insider: management of Yarsta Gunbu resource*

Although many local Tarap-pas are not willing to have the local resource nationalized on the practice level, some villagers do think governmental interventions don't contradict with local management. For example, Nima Dargeyl thought the Yarsta Gunbu is better administered by the National Park Committee. Because compared with local villagers, government has the authority over the outsiders and holds them accountable for things such as environmental degradation. (# 4 Nima Dargeyl) This opinion will only be valid when both

the National Park Committee functions well and laws on resource management improves. However, this doesn't seem to happen based on the Do-Tarap clash in 2014 during the Yarsta Gunbu harvesting season. From around 2006 up to 2013, Yarsta Gunbu collectors need to pay 500 Nepali rupees to the National Park Committee and from 500 to 1500 rupees to the Tarap-pass based on the year they came. The taxation by local people is because Tarap-pas and collectors from outside of Tarap were required to pay same amount of money to the committee, which is problematic: while all consuming resources from the same public areas, outsiders do not have to suffer from the negative results, such as water pollution, decreasing amount of firewood and degradation of the pasturelands, but on the contrary, insiders such as Tarap-pa in the context of Yarsta Gunbu, have to live with all these undesirable results which will directly affect their livelihoods both in the short term and long term. And due to the fact that Yarsta Gunbu is now the major income source for most of the families in Do-Tarap, sharing Yarsta Gunbu with outsiders without any benefits will in the end depletes the resource and puts them into desperate circumstances. This local agreement worked out quite well until in 2014 when the Shey Phoksundo National Park Committee decided to increase the tax to 3000 to outsiders and prohibited local people from taxation, which is the law. If the part of the taxation will eventually be used on the developments of the village, Tarap-pas will not say no to the policy change. However, as they failed reaching an agreement with the committee and the money collected was seized by it, clash broke out between police officers and villagers together with the resentment of getting no revenues from the government in the past three decades. Consequently, with the law remaining unchanged and poor implementations by the committee, government's local resource management will keep causing problems.

During the Yarsta Gunbu season, the idea of being insider as Tarap-pa and understanding of outsiders as people reside somewhere else shed a light on Tarap-pa's understanding of the self and the other. Kongyal Lama, the young boy who thinks motorcycle help impress girls, told the author if the outsider come to Do-Tarap for Yarsta Gunbu, then it is bad. Because there will be less chance to find Yarsta Gunbu and more confrontations between outsiders and Tarap-pas. (#5 Kongyal Lama) The successful businessman Pasang Lama expressed something different. "It's not a good plan to let outsiders come to Do-Tarap and pick Yarsta Gunbu, especially from the perspective of a villager. Because the outsider come here and pay the government, but the government collect all the tax and never spend on the development of Dolpo." (#12 Pasang Lama)

The pros and cons related to both social and economic changes created by Yarta Gunbu are forming and reforming Dolpo-pa's identities in the twenty-first century. Tarap-pas are delighted and thankful for the increasing living standards; the expanded mobility offered by Yarsta Gunbu encourages Tarap-pas to interact with the outside world more, which gives them a better understanding of themselves as Dolpo-pa and the responsibility the government have for the community, thus demanding more support from it. However, it also stimulates social instabilities and economic instability. These negative incidents force Tarap-pas to reset their objectives and change the approaches they utilized to earn a better life. And finally, the

Tarap-pas develop fresh perceptions of insider and outsider by studying of resource management on the national and local level, thus identifying themselves more as Tarap-pas as opposed Dolpo-pas in the context of Yasta Gunbu business.

The readaptation of being the middlemen of Tibetan salt to Chinese products and the transition from being closer with Tibetans to Nepalese greatly influenced Dolpo-pa's identity after the 1960's. As Yarsta Gunbu became such an important part of people's lives, it keeps reshaping Dolpo-pa's understanding of the world, the state, the village and more importantly, of themselves. However, although Dolpo-pa's economic identities are pretty much all recreated due to the close of Tibetan border and Yarsta Gunbu, their social and cultural perception get to maintain.

Social and Cultural Identity

Aside from political and economic identities, social and cultural identities are extremely important to understand a group of people, especially because these cultures and traditions related identities are less likely to experience drastic changes as they are inherently part of people's lives. In the case of Do-Tarap, this is especially true. Communal works that have been practices for centuries remain mostly the same because of the extreme environment requires group works - resources are scattered all over the valley and people only have short summer time to work as it's not feasible to work in the winter. However, as mention earlier in the paper, there is an increasing sense of competition and of more belonging to household as opposed to community. In the twenty-first century when many changes are happening in Dolpo, Dolpo-pas' cultural and social identities are not very distinct from those in the past because cultures and traditions that help the formation of one's cultural and social identity are less likely to be changed by external forces. However, as encountering more with the outside world, some people are becoming more materialistic and profit-oriented.

- *Communal Work and Common Identity*

Although the sense of belonging to a community is gradually changing to household or individuals during the subconscious competition Yarsta Gunbu creates in the harvesting season, Tarap-pas, especially women, still share many common social and cultural identities because for most of the times, they still need to share many communal works. "Despite the internal cleavages of wealth, status, and power, interpersonal relations in the village are pervaded by an aura of diffuse reciprocity. The most obvious example... is the phenomenon of cooperative labor." (James Fisher 1986, 176) Agro-pastoral communities like Do-Tarap cannot maintain normal production to sustain lives without cooperation between labors and other forms of mutual aid. And the extremely harsh environment of Dolpo and traditional agro-pastoral lifestyles require communal work and risk sharing, strengthening common identity among Tarap-pas.

In order to know how has communal works changed over the past decade, interviews were carried out with women from Do-Tarap. Yungduang Choeto, based on her own experience, told the author that communal works are not decreasing. This year in March, she

went to build drinking water system for Lang village, 3 hours walk away from Do-Tarap. Later in May, she joined repairing the canal for the irrigation purpose, and plotted and watered the fields. These days, she has been working with other women to collect yak dung and firewood for winter. Agreeing with Yungduang, Phurwa Lhamo also responded that communal work remains the same as usual. While women are in charge of maintaining irrigation canals, building of drinking water system, plotting and watering the field and collecting firewood, heavy communal works consist of taking herds into the mountains and annual caravan to Tibet in falls on the shoulder of men's.

During the author's stay in Do-Tarap, a post-funeral gathering occurred. A steady stream of villagers continued to arrive throughout the day, beginning early in the morning to set up tents and share in group work. The women were in charge of making Pakele and buckwheat pancakes while the men made offerings out of rice and Tsampa. The sound of chanting Amchis and Lamas echoed through the village as they gathered and created a sacrificial statue in honor of the deceased. Following the events of the day, the family members gathered with a small group of villagers and their horses in order to deliver the offertory Tsampa and Rice balls to every household in the valley.

Both the experience of communal works in Do-Tarap and the interviews conducted with Do-Tarap women prove that communal works are important for the livelihoods of Tarap-pas and the construction and maintenance of the common social identities. However, the constant change of social dynamics in Do-Tarap, due to the influx of more outsiders during the past decade, the gradually increasing interactions between Tarap-pas with outsiders and the developments that took in place the valley, offer Tarap-pas unique opportunities to understand the current situation and themselves, thus recreating their special identities in the 21st century.

- *Where is My Goat?*

Walking along the river from Do to Dokyu, two villages in Tarap Valley, one would encounter numerous kids wearing Chubas with red cheeks. They would run outside from the house once they saw you, putting two hands together, slightly bending their backs and greeting you "Namaste!" This Namaste really affirms you that you are in Nepal, not Tibet. Although the children seem to remain innocent, the grownups are adapting to whole new world. This could be seen after the introduction of the caravan movie, one that got Dolpo onto the national and world stages. According to Pasang Darbo, the movie *Himalaya* directed by Eric Villa made some villagers in Do-Tarap become more materialistic and realistic: "...the villagers know that those foreigners profit a lot from the pictures they took here, so they now want to profit as well. When teachers from CMS went to take the students' pictures in order to help them find donors, their parents thought the pictures were for selling and thus forbidding us to take it unless the profit is shared." (#1 Pasang Darbo) And it's quite funny that after the interview with Tsewang Tsering, the old lady was joking and asking the author for goats as payment for participating the research. These accounts to some extent explain how villagers' mentality regarding to outsiders doing research or photographing is changing

towards a more profit-oriented way. However, keep in mind they don't represent people from Dolpo – they only speak for themselves.

- *Culture Preservation*

Physically being in Do-Tarap and observing the activities happened there is fun. One can really see the rich culture and history of the village. However, Nagwang Tenzin, a singer who published musical CDs called “Dragon year” in 2012 and “Memories of Dolpo” in 2008, thought although Dolpo had rich culture, only few people knew about it. To preserve the culture, songs about Dolpo were published. “Although there aren't much changes in the singing and dancing culture, due to the fact that people have more work, there's little time for people to be busy by dancing and singing. Younger generations are also aware of the traditions but their attention is not solely on that because of other distractions.” (#10 Nagwang Tenzin) Generally speaking, the culture and traditions are quite well preserved in Do-Tarap just based on the short amount of time stay there.

Dolpo-pas' social and cultural identities, though definitely experiencing changes such as the emergence of competition of Yarsta Gunbu business and some people being more materialistic, remains mostly intact because of their ways of living don't change drastically as communal works are still crucial for surviving in Do-Tarap.

The dangers and difficulties faced in advocating for Dolpo

In the last few decades, Dolpo-pas have been leaving their own comfort zone and trying to engage with the world politically, economically and socially. They advocate for themselves by demanding more political rights and attentions from the government, both as Nepali citizens and as Yarsta Gunbu businessmen who need to protect the local environment; they actively preserve their own cultures and learn more about the mainstream Nepali culture. Advocating for Dolpo by the educated Dolpo-pas might seem to be quite impressive and in some ways even touching people's heart, because as people come from such a geographically isolated and economically underdeveloped area, it is amazing that Dolpo-pas can equip themselves so well with knowledge, responsibility, passion and love for the community and advocate for local villagers. However, it is important for people, especially Dolpo-pas who either actively participate in the activities or just observe aside, to not be deceived by understanding of their own initiatives superficially and feeling well about the current situation of Dolpo-pas' advocations. Other than the country, people should keep questioning what are the problems or potential dangers these activities might create and for whom are some educated Dolpo-pas actually advocating for?

- *The Loss of What Culture: Romanticization of Dolpo*

Though not directly attributed by advocations of Dolpo-pas, the change of cultures in Dolpo is caused by the results the advocations lead to, which are the expanded mobility to interact with others and the increasing financial capital to consume other cultures. Additionally, “*We're no Tibetans*,” published in the *Kathmandu Post*, ascribed the change of

culture to “the ‘original’ Dolpo cultures are changing slowly due to globalization and migration, and this transformative process further distinguishes our culture from Tibetan culture.”(Tashi Tewa) There are more modern facilities as Television and phones, more interactions with the people from both lower villages and governments, and easier access to goods such as packaged food, western clothing and so on. These changes, especially due to commodities becoming more accessible and people preferring easy lives, might potentially lead to the loss of Dolpo’s traditions, cultures and skills. When being asked, “If you have a choice of buying shoes from the market and making their own traditional shoes, what do you prefer,” students studying in Kathmandu gave really interesting answers and explanations. Tashi Lhamo and Tsering Youndon prefer to buy directly from the market because it is fast and easy. However, Lhakpa Dhondup said he wanted to make his own shoes, but because people are getting busier, he doesn’t have time to make it. Tsering Bhuti’s replied, “I want to buy them from the market and at the same time know how to make it.” This sounds like a perfect solution, enjoying the modern commodity while having the knowledge of how to maintain skills of making things. However, how possible is it?

The huge argument lying here is how legitimate or worthy it is to embrace modernity by surrendering traditions and cultures? Or even what are tradition and cultures? If cultures are fluid and always changing, then why can’t Dolpo-pas have modernity as part of their current cultures? Although it’s up to each individual to interpret the definition of losing one’s cultures and taking side with modernity or traditions and skills, it’s important to bear in mind that some traditions and cultures can only be found in certain communities while Coca Cola can be spotted everywhere, even in Cuba now. One can argue that the Coca Cola one find in Nepal is different than that in Mexico because of in Mexico they use real sugarcane. But then compared to Mexican culture with Nepali culture, which difference is greater and valuable?

During the interviews with parents in Do-Tarap, many of them had admitted their worries about children not returning back to Do-Tarap because they wanted to live a easier life in Kathmandu. And Karma Wangyal Gurung thought, “In the village, life hasn’t changed a lot. But people in Kathmandu are westernized. We forget our culture, traditions and skills such as how to make clothes and shoes. But westernization is not a bad thing and we should at the same time preserve our culture.”

How should we judge the phenomena that young people now prefer staying in Kathmandu and embracing the modernity here if we have to? One suggestion is to keep in mind that do not let the western romanticization of the Shangri-La Tibet and other culturally Tibetan areas legitimize the argument that Dolpo-pas should avoid interacting with modernity and maintain their cultures and traditions. Indeed, we need to admit that Dolpo is not a primitive and timeless place as may people have fantasized. “...The West perceives some lack within itself and fantasized that the answer is to be found somewhere in the East,”(Lopez, preface) and in Tibet particularly as “it seems not to belong to our earth, a society left on the shelf, set in amber, preserved in deep freeze, a land so close to the sky that the natural occupation of her people was to pray.” (Lopez, preface)

However, it seems not only “Westerners” fantasize Tibet, but also Nepalese are romanticizing the culturally Tibetan areas such as Dolpo. “When I first came to Kathmandu with CMS in 2002, the man who coordinated the program was furious that we didn’t wear Chubba and Somba, traditional cloth and shoes that are made only for extreme weather in Dolpo. He insisted that we should dress according to our cultures to show our identity as Dolpo-pas.” (#1 Pasang Darbo) This kind of relates to the Bedouins in northern Africa. “When those Westerners hired us on our camels, they were so surprised and angry that we didn’t dress like the Bedouin they had in mind, that they decided to ship these Touareg clothes all the way from somewhere called France. We can hardly move in them and they make our tongues hang out like dogs in summer heat.... And just because they couldn’t let us be Bedouin in our own clothes, they docked our wages.” (Lavie 1990, 340) Similarly, when Eric Valli made the movie about Dolpo, the hidden land of the Himalaya, he depicted the Tibetanness of Dolpo and downplayed the Nepalianness. He also tried to present an “unauthentic” Dolpo as actors were hired from all over the world; he required each household to be cleaned up before shooting and asking each villager to put on their best “Tibetan” clothes. Unfortunately, although the film thrust Dolpo into Nepal’s national consciousness and into the rhetoric of Kathmandu’s development circles, the attention that followed crossed the modern concept of development with the perception of Dolpo as primitive and timeless. (Bauer 2004)

Consequently, the romanticization of Tibet and culturally Tibetan areas by both international community and of Dolpo by the domestic forces are aggravating the situation as Dolpo-pas’ basic needs such as clothing are not recognized by others and what’s even worse is the association with Tibet as timeless and primitive places prevents the state from making proper plans for Dolpo. Tashi Tewa argued that “the other problem of romanticization of Tibet is it encourages Dolpo-pas relate themselves more with Tibetan cultures than with indigenous people of Nepal. And in the end, they care more about Tibet issue such as free Tibet as oppose to their own problems in Dolpo.”

- *The Gap and The Elite*

Even though it’s quite difficult for Dolpo-pas to solve the problems generated by the romanticization of Dolpo because the image was created by both international and national level forces, it’s much easier to deal with the gaps between Dolpo-pas are advocating in the village and those outside, which produce a lack of understanding between each party, and the potentiality of the advocacy becoming an elite movement, which will fail to strive for the urgent need of the local villagers.

There might be a gap of communications or a lack of solidarity between advocates in villages and outside the village in Kathmandu. It’s also worth noticing that Dolpo-pas from Do-Tarap might have different needs than those from Mukot. The problem of the gap is although groups of Dolpo-pas are trying to improve the situation for Dolpo in general, they might towards different directions. It’s like a situation when horses of the two-horses carriage run towards the exact opposite directions as one running to east and one to the west while they are supposed to head to the north.

When talking with the educated one staying in Do-Tarap about active advocates in Kathmandu, most of them didn't know whom the author was talking about. Nima Dargeyl once said, "I don't know Tashi Tewa and I don't feel there is a gap between what Dolpo-pa is doing in the village and what is he planning outside the village in Kathmandu." However, this is a bit conflicting since Tashi Tewa is the one whose talks are taken as representing the whole Dolpo region. It might be more powerful and efficient for all the groups of Dolpo advocates to reach a common understanding and strive for the same thing.

Advocating for Dolpo is done mainly by the educated Dolpo-pas and Dolpo-pas who have accesses, privileges, time and energy to do so. Although they are groups of people with better understanding of the political situations in Nepal, the rights they were given based on laws and Nepali language, they have the disadvantage of not knowing the real needs of the villagers or of the hardship the villagers are going through. In another way, they are usually not part of the group they are advocating for, thus might ignore many essential needs of that group. It will probably be fine if the educated approaches to the villagers frequently and try to understand their needs and the reason behind them as much as possible. However, the facts that many educated ones resettle somewhere else and the physical distance create detachment to the community negatively influence their understandings of the needs. In addition to that, it is not uncommon that many of the educated ones or elites are so drawn in to the western theories that they advocate for the local villagers based on western theories they've learned or even on their personal experiences, which neither of them can represent the need of the people. Tashi Tewa's father is the representative of Dolpo in Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), and Tashi himself as a social science researcher is also representing Dolpo in one of the indigenous groups. When being asked "if there is one thing you could do for Dolpo, what it would be," he said, "I want to publish a book on Dolpo, especially about Dolpo's relation with the government." Although it sounds like a great idea of advocating Dolpo by educating others on these issues, it's disappointing that he fails to recognize the need of the villagers. In addition to that, throughout the interview, he didn't talk about any details on the village level and kept saying, "I don't know many details." On the contrary, his analysis of Dolpo was more based on broad and theoretical themes such as the constitutions. (#22 Tashi Tewa) Wangmo Darbo, in responding to the soccer tournament and Losar celebration organized by Students of Dolpo, said, "sometimes I feel they are actually using the Dolpo thing to get more attention for themselves. If they really want to change the situation, they should go back and see what's going on there. And the money should be should be used for helping villages as opposed to organize soccer tournament or Loasr celebration, maybe the money." What Wangmo has been saying is exactly the other potential danger of among all the things: using Dolpo identity as a means to empower themselves, and is closely related to over politicization of the identity.

- *The Over politicization of Dolpo Identity*

The potentiality of over politicalizing the Dolpo identity is problematic because it's more likely to be used for personal interest as opposed to for the welfare of the others. And the over strengthening on being Dolpo-pa might also harm people who themselves advocate

for Dolpo. Because they might overlook other important identities of themselves, and being trapped of only talking about Dolpo. Identity should be used to make connections with others and broaden our scope of understanding ourselves. However, if over constructed some identities we might be so trapped in one identity that it will on the contrary, minimizes our ways to interact with the world. *"We are not Tibetans,"* stresses the Dolpo-pa identity a lot. In an interview with the author, Tashi Tewa, it became clear that he did so because "if people take us merely as Tibetans, they only admit the cultural relations and neglect the political and social difference. However, we Dolpo-pas are in totally different positions compared to Tibetans. So we need to address our Dolpo-pa identity to get more attention as opposed to be regarded as Tibetans and be ignored by the government. The needs of Dolo-pas and Tibetans, both politically and socially, are indeed very different." (#22 Tashi Tewa)

Credits and gratitude should definitely be given to people advocating for Dolpo, for the changes and hopes they bring into the community. However, just because it's about real lives of local villagers, they need to be more careful about the potential dangers of getting things wrong. The romanticization of Dolpo, gaps of understanding between groups in and outside of Dolpo, the possibility of it becoming elite movement and over politicization of Dolpo related issues have to be concerns of the advocates in order to make real and valuable changes.

Recommendations On What Should Dolpo-pa Do and Why Is Dolpo Important:

Warmly greeted by villagers once getting off the horse and fed with many delicious food during the stay, Tarap-pas' hospitality makes the author feel home. Setting up fires with grandmother, chatting with women while they were waving, and playing with little children on the field in front of the house. These beautiful memories of Do-Tarap encourage the author to think what are the alternatives Tarap-pas can seek to advocate for themselves since the current approaches don't really bring big changes, and why should the government care about Dolpo.

Based on limited understanding from the field work and numerous conversations with Tarap-pas, one suggestion to improve the advocations is to rally with the lower caste Nepalese with other underprivileged people to fight against the Brahman and Chhetri as they "predominate at every level of the government, perpetuating the cultural and ethnic hierarchy that the Ranas created," (Bista, Hutt) Just as Gyalbo Bhote said that there are two caste of people holding most of the positions in the government, leaving little room for people outside of it. "When you apply for the job, they are the people who will read your files. So there are inherent disadvantages from the social structure." (#15 Gyalbo Bhote) And the government should care about Dolpo because one, Dolpo-pas are actively engaging with the government now, which makes the implementations of projects on the local level much easier and the villagers will be more than happy to help monitoring the projects; and two with more Dolpo-pas being educated, it's not easy to prevaricate them with little efforts from the government. Besides, bringing more developments to Dolpo will strengthen people's national identity, which might in return help stabilizing the society.

- *Rally Between the Himalayan Mountains and Terai Plains*

When talking about Dolpo, people tend to associate the region with other northern border regions in Nepal, where people share similar languages, cultures, lifestyles and perhaps political destinies as being long ignored by the government. It seems obvious that there should be more solidarity among the trans-Himalayan regions and collaborations to advocate for the marginalized people in culturally Tibetan areas of Nepal. However, the cooperation hasn't produced any outcome. "There were some collaborations between the Himalayan regions before the Maoist insurgent. Now I don't see too much connection between the communities." (#15 Gyalbo Bhote) Additionally, it's important to bear in mind that when we are talking about Himalayan people, we are not only talking about a group of homogenous people who share the same language, culture, history, or identities; who will have absolute solidarity in advocating for the Himalayan people. The power dynamics in the movements which are participated by very similar people but still have saliently different group identity might even make it harder to solve the conflicts because people are culturally very similar, but they have very different political identities. It's hard to convince one group to handover the right to a group of people that's culturally similar to them. Also, the unevenness of economic ability might also cause dispute in this trans-Himalaya movement. For example, the economically better off Tamang/Sherpa people might have a stronger voice in leading the movement.

On the contrary, if the Himalayan people collaborate with the lower caste people, a majority of the oppressed people under the caste system, there might be a greater chance of making differences, transforming the problem of ethnicity into underprivileged and marginalized people. Of course, it will be extremely difficult to manage putting Buddhists with Hindus, Nepali-speaking community with Tibetan-speaking community, people who live in Terai with those live in Dolpo, but as long as people have the same dream -change the situation and demand for the rights and attention from the government, and understand the greater chance of achieving the goal by uniting together, there is still hope. This is in another way promoting the national unity, which might strengthen the national identity.

Another recommendation is for Dolpo-pa. Although it is quite frustrating that the government is still not paying much attention to Dolpo and there are so many obstacles on the way to empower Dolpo-pa, they need to recognize the wonderful changes they have made and the support and trust from their own community. The government might keep neglecting them, the Nepalese might not know anything about Dolpo and the Americans might only be interested in the "romanticized" Dolpo and leave right after a few days' of stay. It is essential that they understand the Dolpo-pas are the best hope for Dolpo, not the external forces, because they are the ones whose lives are impacted and who suffered. The solution and resilience should lie in the heart of the village.

- *Why Should the State Care?*

Different from Dolpo-pas who in the past are not willing to work with the government, the willingness of them to cooperate with the government now is definitely something the

government should consider and taken advantage of. The government should make more efforts in developing those places with the advantage of local involvement at each level, such as physical work help and monitoring the process. If Dolpo is overall more developed and the government can provide more benefits for the people, there will be a stronger national identity, something the state has been working on for decades. In addition, as people are becoming more educated, government should not ignore them as it did in the past. Actively help is probably the only solution, so Dolpo won't become another problem of the already desperate situation

Conclusion

Starting from the 1960's up till today, Dolpo has gone through dramatic political, economic and social changes brought by both internal and external force, transforming Dolpo both negatively and positively and changing Dolpo-pas' understanding of the world, the state, the village, and most importantly, themselves. Their political, economic and social identities have all been shaped and reshaped by more accessible education, increasing interactions with the outside world, the modified policies published by the state and transformation of geopolitics internationally.

Politically, in Nepal, political, social and economic forces on both national and international level are remaking Dolpo-pas' understanding of what is government and what does it mean to have a government. Nation building plans such as the creation of Village Development Committee, issuing of citizenship card and incorporating Dolpo into national taxation system are encouraging Dolpo-pas to think themselves as more Nepalese. And the abolishment of transhumance between China and Nepal made Dolpo-pas more dependent on the Nepali state. The internal changes of Dolpo-pas' realization being ignored by the government for a long time and their better understanding of the obligations the state has and the essential rights they have because of more education and interactions they with the outside world transform Dolpo-pa from avoiding the state on purpose to actively reach and engage with the government. Many approaches such as switch from Tibetan Government Schools to the Nepali schools are utilized by villagers to reach and interact with the government. However, due to the political structural of the society which inherently expels representatives from Dolpo, the poor road connections between Do-Tarap and the headquarter, and the lack of sufficient job opportunities in villages, Dolpo-pas are having a hard time reaching and working with the government to improve the current situation of being neglected.

Economically, Dolpo-pa's identities are linked closely with the external forces: political decisions made by the Chinese government and the market economy of China. The padlock of the border region in Tibet impacted Dolpo-pa's traditional way of making a living and forced them to interact more Nepalese from the middle hills. However, Dolpo-pas also find resilience in it by altering the disadvantage into advantage: instead of Tibetan salt, they bring Chinese products for sell to the lower villagers. The sheer increasing need of Yarsta Gunbu by the Chinese market also in a way determined the social and economic dynamics of Dolpo

society: the increasing economic gap between Tarap-pas and influx of outsiders for Yarsta Gunbu make the society unstable both socially and economically. There are more crimes and confrontations nowadays, and many villagers have loans and debts. The change of agro-pastoral lifestyle and focus on Yarsta Gunbu are internally related to local resource management which is now carried out by governmental officials. The break of state law of national park revenues and not putting locals' livelihoods on the priority list resulted in Dolo-pas' understanding of state as after all, just a political entity that doesn't care its citizens.

Socially, Dolp-pas' social and cultural identities experienced less drastic changes as they are inherently part of people's lives. Centuries-long communal work practices remain mostly the same because of the extreme environment which requires group works. Resources such as firewood and yak dung are scattered all over the valley and the only suitable time for getting a year's work done is during summer time. However, as mention earlier, there is an increasing sense of competition and of more belonging to household as opposed to community. Although many changes are happening in Dolpo for the past fifty years, Dolpo-pas' cultural and social identities are not very distinct from those in the past because cultures and traditions that help the formation of one's cultural and social identity are less likely to be changed by external forces. However, as encountering more with the outside world, their understanding of the society has evolved as well: more people become materialistic and profit oriented.

People who advocate for Dolpo should deserve countless credits and gratitude, and are appreciated by many people efor the changes and hopes they bring into the community. However, just because they can make so many differences about real lives of the local villagers, they need to be especially careful about the potential dangers of getting things wrong. The romanticization of Dolpo, gaps of understanding between groups in and outside of Dolpo, the possibility of it becoming elite movement and over politicization of Dolpo related issues are things people need to pay attention to in order to not waste their energy and time and to make real and valuable changes for Dolpo.

Although Dolpo-pas having been working on ameliorating the situation in Dolpo for the past decade and many positive changes have been made, there is still a lot of room for future improvement. One recommendation for that is to rally with the lower caste Nepalese with other underprivileged people. Because as opposed to frame the Dolpo question into ethnic dissatisfaction about the government, it is likely to be powerful and efficient if people understand it as a development issue of the majority underprivileged and marginalized people. And the government should care about Dolpo because as Dolpo-pas are actively engaging with it, the implementations of projects on the local level will be much easier and efficient. In addition, more Dolpo-pas are educated for the past two decades, so it's not easy to prevaricate them with little efforts as the government did before. Bringing more developments to Dolpo will not only strengthen people's national identity but also in return help stabilizing the society.

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Suggestions for future studies:

Because the time of this Independent Study Project dedicated on researching is less than thirty days, with one third of it being spent on commuting from Kathmandu to Do-Tarap, there are many different valuable perspectives the paper fails to cover, thus limiting the scope and the depth of the research. For future studies on identity politics in Dolpo, it's highly recommended that the researcher can spend more time in the village and make connections with villagers. The bonding with people and participating with family housework will create new identities as a family member as opposed to a researcher who comes to only talk to people. The transition in the mentality of both villagers and researcher enables a greater possibility of learning more from each other, and transforming the information from as hard fact for research purpose to self-related knowledge.

In addition, as this paper is a case study of Do-Tarap, one of the six VDCs from Dolpo, it is of vital significance for researchers to conduct future studies in other VDCs throughout Dolpo. Although the Tarap-pa identity can to some extent shed lights on how Dolpo-pas from other VDCs understand certain changes, it's important to recognize the possibility of my overgeneralization of Dolpo identity because differences do exist within Dolpo. For example, because Tinkyu is geographically closer to the border areas in Tibet and there is a road connecting the village with the annual market, the village definitely has more Chinese products than others and Tinkyu-pa will probably be more likely to take the presence of Chinese product for granted. Another interesting thing the future studies can look at is how the social relations and resource management is different in Saldang, the most populated VDC, or how Dolpo-pas' identities are influenced as some VDCs are on the peripheral of Dolpo and closer to the Nepali VDCs. Therefore, the distinctions in geographies, populations and neighboring places within Dolpo demonstrate the importance of expanding the research to other villages.

The paper tries to draw connections between the Dolpo advocations with other ethnic movement such as what's happening right now in Terai. However, due to the lack of a well-founded understanding of the caste system and history of Nepal, very limited and bold opinions were developed by the author. Consequently, it will be interesting to have more research and analysis on how Dolpo fit into these ethnic activities or underprivileged/marginalized category in Nepal. Maybe even what will the future of Dolpo look like.

Appendices A:

Glossary

This is a list of Tibetan terms and Nepali terms used in this paper. The Tibetan terms started with phonetic spellings with the correct spellings in italics based on Wiley system. The Nepali terms is only given in phonetic spellings. All spellings are followed by definitions of terms in English. This glossary is created with the help from the High Frontier book by Kenneth Bauer.

Tibetan Terms:

Amchi (*am-chi*): particitioner of Tibetan medicine

Chubba (*phyu-pa*): Tibetan overgarment

Dolpo-pa (*dol-po-ba*): a person from Dolpo

Khampa (*kham-pa*): a person from Kham area

Netsang (*gnas-tshang*): business partner and fictive kin

Tsampa(*rstsam-pa*): roasted barley flower, the staple of Tibetan-speaking world

Yarsta Gunbu (*dbyar-rtsa-dgun-bu*): caterpillar fungus

Nepali Terms:

Dasain: the major Hindu festival of Nepal

MulukiAin: the first national civil code of law, promulgated in 1845, which established the legal basis for caste and forbade intercaste marriages in Nepal

Sagarmatha: Nepali name for Mount Everest

Terai: the region that comprise the southern third of Nepal, a low-lying subtropical belt.

Appendices B:

Interview List

#1 Pasang Pasang, Male, 28, Academic Collaborator and Manager at the Snow Leopard Hostel

#2 Karma Wangyal Gurung, Male, 28, Actor in the movie *Himalayan*

#3 Ganga Karki, Female, 25, English teacher at Crystal Mountain School

4 Nima Dargeyl, Male, 28, Teachers at Crystal Mountain School

#5 Pemba Gurung, Male, 22, Villager

Tsering Wangyel, Male, 18, Villager

Kongyal Lama, Male, 20, Villager

#6 Tashi Gyurmey, Male, 28, Villager

#7 Tsewang Lhundup, Male, 41, Furniture designer

pema Lhazam, Female, 59, Housewife

#8 Namgyal dharbo, Male, 16, Student

#9 Phurwa Lhamo, Female, N/A, Housewife

#10 Nagwang Tenzin, Male, 35, Singer

#11 Karma Chozen, Female, 39, Housewife

Monlam Chelmar, Female, 43, Housewife

#12 Pasang Lama, Male 37, Yarsta Gunbu businessman

#13 Mingmar Tsering, Male, 44, villager

#14 Yungduang Choeto Female, 54, Housewife

#15 Gyalbo Bhote, Male, 28, Administrator for Crystal Mountain School

#16 Tsewang Tsering, Female, 84, Villager

#18 Dawa Dolma, Female, 20, Housewife

#19 Lhakpa Dhondup, Male, 29, Representative of the village

#20 Wangmo Darbo, Female, 26, Medical School student

#21 Tashi Lhamo, Female, 16, Student

Tsering Youdon Lama, Female, 16, Student

Lhakpa Dhondup, male, 17, Student

Tsering Bhutri, Female, 16, Student

#22 Tashi Tewa, Male, N/A, Social science researcher.

#23 Hari Prasad Pandey, Male, N/A, Officer at REDD Implementation Center, Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation

#24 Tilak Paudel Male, N/A, Under Secretary of Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport

#25 Lava Deo Awasthi Male, N/A Joint secretary of Ministry of Education



(Author with two kids in Do-Tarap, Dolpo.)